Matchmaking

by Starsong

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FYI's: For anyone who hasn't read my previous stories (Come on guys! What's wrong with you? Go read them!), Lila's father was a prominent ambassador for Puckworld, and she's used to the kind of attention that prominent political figures and their families often receive. That's why she's so used to tabloids and reporters.

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When Wildwing walked into the Rec Room, he found Duke doubled over with laughter. The older duck almost fell off the couch, dropping the newspaper that he had been holding.

"What's so funny?" Wildwing wanted to know, walking over and picking up the paper. Duke just shook his head and tried to get some control.

Wildwing looked at the headline. His face turned red and his jaw dropped slightly. Then he started to chuckle.

"Am I missing something?" Lila tilted her head at him as she entered the room, glancing at Duke. Wildwing just grinned and handed her the paper. Lila took it and began to read. A smile broke out on her face and she shook her head, covering a giggle.

"You'd think they could come up with something a little more creative," she commented. Duke snorted.

"Oh come on. Wildwing and MALLORY? That's as absurd as--as Dive and

Tanya."

"I know that, and you know that," Lila said, still smiling, "but think about it. First of all, there are only seven of us on this entire planet. And we all live together. I'm surprised they haven't started this sooner. I guess they were hung up on the fact that we're aliens. Not only that, I'd bet money that the next headline will say that you're competing with Wing for Mal's affections."

"You've got to be kidding," Wildwing grinned. "Now there's a match made in heaven." He failed to duck as Duke threw a cushion at him.

"Four guys and three girls. If you'll notice, we're one short. That means competition," she grinned, "And I wouldn't be surprised if someone decided that Tanya and Nosedive really DID have it going on. It's just impossible enough to be romantic. But then again, you're the team leader. So after it is revealed that Duke is madly in love with Mallory, I'd say it's more likely that the following headline will say that Tanya has a thing for you."

"Me? And TANYA?"

"Women love men of power. Or so these things," she waved the paper, "like to tell us. I'm not even going to ask what you're doing reading the National Inquirer, Duke."

"I got a good laugh, didn't I?" Duke chuckled. Lila grinned.

"So what else do you think they're going to come up with?" Wing wanted to know, throwing himself down in an armchair.

"Hmm. Well, I wouldn't be terribly surprised if Nosedive and Mallory suddenly have a torid affair behind your back," she commented. "That's assuming, of course, that things don't work out between him and Tanya." That sent both of them into hysterics.

"You're making this up," Wildwing grinned, shaking his head.

"I'm not. I'm merely thinking like a tabloid reporter."

"There's a difference?" Duke said sardonically. Lila smiled.

"Not much of one, I admit. But, if you look at it from an outsider's perspective," she sat down and propped her feet up on the coffee table. "Mallory shows more respect to you than the rest of us combined," she waved the paper at Wildwing.

"I'm her commanding officer," Wildwing pointed out. "Mallory's too professional to ignore that, even if she does think we're a bunch of amateurs."

"Again, I know that, and you know that--"

"But all they're seeing is a chance to sell papers," Duke finished.

"Exactly," Lila nodded. "Most everything they're going to say can be explained by Mal's military training. However, Mal's awfully young by their standards to have been through as much as she has. So when you

put her in charge, or pay special attention to anything she says..."

"They think I'm showing special preference rather than common sense," Wildwing grinned.

"Right. And when they decide they want to see something, the slightest little thing will become of paramount importance. Knock her out of the way of an explosive or laser blast, and they'll be convinced you held on to her for an extra second afterwards, proving that you have feelings for her. As for Duke being interested in her, is that not the most romantic couple you've ever heard of? The man with the dark past, and the straight arrow lady of light? They don't need any other encouragement. They're completely facinated by the opposites attract theory."

"Never mind the fact that it took her months to trust me any farther than she could throw me," Duke snorted.

"Knowing Mal, that's a pretty good ways," Lila's eyes twinkled. "And that just makes it all the more romantic. She tries to fight it, but she's drawn to you by forces beyond her control."

"Yeah. Guess I just have that animal magnetism," Duke smirked, leaning back and folding his arms behind his head. Lila rolled her eyes, and Wildwing returned the cushion Duke had thrown at him earlier.

"I'm still waiting to hear why Tanya's so gone on me," Wildwing commented.

"For the exact opposite reasons that they think Mal likes you. Tanya's a civilian, she's not cut out for war. You know that. Really, when you come right down to it, she's surprisingly naive and not very confidant outside of her realm of expertise. She looks up to you, for encouragement, reassurance. Remember the dinosaur attack? You were the one who convinced her that she had to get over her phobia. Reporters see something like that, and they don't see a leader supporting one of the ducks he's duty-bound to protect. They don't even see a nice guy lending a nervous friend a hand. They see a woman who adores the strength and the power that you have."

"You know, they may be on to something there," Duke grinned mischievously. "Tanya sure was upset when Dragaunus took over the Pond and we thought you were dead." Wildwing flushed and glared at him. Lila giggled.

"Relax, Wing, I don't think you have anything to worry about. Duke knows as well as I do that he and Mallory would have been just as upset--AFTER they got free and stopped Dragaunus. Again, the difference is training and experience. Mal and Duke were able to put their feelings aside, temporarily, and see the bigger picture. Tanya's just not used to doing that. And," she grinned, "It's entirely possible that they'll pin her on Duke instead."

"You have got to be kidding," Duke shook his head.

"You never could resist a challenge, Duke."

"Yeah, but still. Tanya's not exactly my type."

"Actually, you'd be surprised," Lila said mildly, "She's a lot more adventurous than most give her credit for, although I'm sure we all know you prefer dangerous women. I'm not even going to mention that incident with--"

"Don't say it!" Duke held up a hand. Lila grinned again and continued.

"But you're hardly the type of man she usually prefers. I think Tanya's ideal man is going to have to be someone who understands what the heck she's talking about. Can you imagine coming home from work every day, and not being able to share your day with your spouse because they wouldn't understand a word you were saying? Her work is so much a part of her life, I don't think she could really spend forever with someone who can't understand what she gets so excited about. The longest lasting romances I ever remember her having were with others of exceptional intelligence, because she could talk to them, share ideas with them, help and be helped."

"I never really thought of it that way," Wildwing commented. "You're probably right."

"Ok, now for the real kicker," Duke leaned forward again, grinning. "Mallory and NOSEDIVE?" Lila ticked off the reasons on her fingers.

"They look closer in age to each other than to any of us. They fight all the time, which means they MUST be really, really attracted to each other. Nosedive is constantly antagonizing her, which is just his immature way of showing he likes her. There's also an opposites attract theme going on there too--straight-arrow military minded woman meets carefree, happy-go-lucky guy who teaches her how to enjoy life. Tabloid writing is all misinterpretation and misrepresentation of the facts. I've known a lot of tabloid writers who just plain made stuff up, but the best stories are the ones with just enough truth to convince the uninformed reader that the conclusions they draw are accurate. Back on Puckworld, all I had to do was smile at a man and every reporter in the galaxy was suddenly writing about my hidden affair behind my father's back. I believe he disowned me three, no, it was four times." She shrugged. "It's just something celebrities and other public figures have to learn to live with. Everyone will be overanalyzing and misinterpreting everything we do for as long as we're here."

Duke stood and stretched. "Well, at least it'll be good to lighten the mood every once in a while," he tossed over his shoulder as he left the room.

Lila smiled after him, then turned as Wing spoke again.

"So what about you?" he asked.

"What about me?" she lifted an eyebrow. "You guys are the interesting ones; for once I get to fade into the background. Grin's pretty much the same. He's too quiet to hold the public interest for long. I may come into the spotlight a little if and when I start skating again, but until then, you're the stars. Nobody cares what us behind-the-scene people do."

"So if you do start skating again," Wildwing asked, "What do you think they'll say?"

"With all the time we spend together? What do you think?" Lila answered with a lopsided grin.

"Now, now, that would ruin my romance with Mal," he pointed out.

"I suppose we'll just have to make time for each other when she's sneaking out to see Dive," she replied with a wink.

"Do I want to know," Lila and Wildwing turned to the door, "What exactly you're talking about?" Mallory finished, her hands on her hips. Wildwing and Lila looked at each other and laughed.

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Author's notes: This is my answer to all those discussion lines that are arguing over which duck is in love with which. Come on guys. Do you seriously think the writers were thinking about that kind of thing when they wrote this? As much as we love it, and as many possibilities that are here, IT IS JUST A CARTOON SHOW. If you want to argue about personality compatability, that's one thing, but citing evidence from the episodes is a bit hard to swallow. Especially since there are so many contradictions. My conclusion is this: As of the end of the first season, there was no romantic interest between any of the ducks. Whether something developes in the much-hoped for second season remains to be seen. Of course, a lot of fanfic characters are going to be disappointed if ANYONE gets romantically involved.

End
file.